

PERFORMANCE TASK SAMPLE

Social Studies

Grade 11

A South Sudanese Constitution

The new nation of South Sudan has called upon citizens of the world's democracies to share the challenges that their own founding citizens faced in creating a country, and to recommend ways in which the South Sudanese might apply these lessons learned.

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A South Sudanese Constitution

Principal SS competency assessed:

Construct Sound Arguments

Draw and defend conclusions about historical, economic, and current-day events, based in logical thinking and powerful and sufficient and appropriate evidence.

Additional SS competencies assessed:

Develop Interpretations and Evaluations

Analyze data and sources, develop powerful models, and develop insightful conclusions about historical events, within the context of our complex, interdependent world.

Communicate

Communicate historical and economic information and ideas clearly and effectively, adjusting to address different audiences and purposes.

Contribute

Work effectively as an individual, a member of a team, and a member of society to build communities that support a shared commitment to excellence in inquiry, analysis, interpretation, and communication; and to build a better society.

Self-Assess and Self-Adjust

Pro-actively seek feedback, assess progress and performance all along the way, and make timely and appropriate adjustments, based on gaps between goals and results.

New York State Standards addressed and assessed at a major level:

Standard 1, Key Idea 1

The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.

Intermediate:

- interpret the ideas, values, and beliefs contained in the Declaration of Independence and the New York State Constitution and United States Constitution, Bill of Rights, and other important historical documents

Standard 1, Key Idea 2

Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

Intermediate:

- analyze the role played by the United States in international politics, past and present

Standard 2, Key Idea 4:

The skills of historical analysis include the ability to investigate differing and competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain the importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time.

Intermediate:

- investigate important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing these hypotheses, and forming conclusions

Standard 5, Key Idea 1

The study of civics, citizenship, and government involves learning about political systems; the purposes of government and civic life; and the differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power, authority, governance, and law.

Intermediate:

- analyze how the values of a nation affect the guarantee of human rights and make provisions for human needs
- consider the nature and evolution of constitutional democracies
- explore the rights of citizens in other parts of the hemisphere and determine how they are similar to and different from the rights of American citizens

Standard 5, Key Idea 3

Central to civics and citizenship is an understanding of the roles of the citizen within American constitutional democracy and the scope of a citizen's rights and responsibilities.

Intermediate

- explain what citizenship means in a democratic society, how citizenship is defined in the Constitution and other laws of the land, and how the definition of citizenship has changed in the United States and New York State over time

- understand that the American legal and political systems guarantee and protect the rights of citizens and assume that citizens will hold and exercise certain civic values and fulfill certain civic responsibilities
- discuss the role of an informed citizen in today's changing world

Social Studies Skills:

Thinking Skills (Chart A)

II. Using information

Students shall be able to...

- scrutinize possible consequences of alternative courses of action by evaluating them in light of basic values, listing arguments for and against such proposals, and selecting courses of action most likely to achieve goals
- revise generalizations in the light of new data

III. Presenting information

Students shall be able to...

- write in an expository way by
 - forming generalizations based on appropriate data
 - supporting such generalizations through the use of relevant factual data
 - using different forms of written exposition: investigative, informative, interpretive, **argumentative**

Thinking Strategies (Chart B)

I. The student will be able to find problems.

The student will...

- raise questions related to a problem
 - generate ideas and questions which show originality, flexibility, and inventiveness
- use higher level thinking skills of comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation
 - establish a network of related facts and concepts
 - reach some tentative conclusions or hypotheses

II. The student will be able to solve problems which are either presented by the teacher or which are identified by the student.

The student will...

- organize and use data by
 - scrutinizing possible consequences of alternative courses of action, by evaluating them in light of basic values, listing arguments for and against such proposals, and selecting courses of action most likely to achieve goals
- develop a product or conclusion which summarizes the information and can be shared in writing

IV. The student will be able to communicate orally, visually, and/or in writing the results of the problem-finding/solving effort.

The student will...

- use different forms of written expression: investigative/informative, interpretive, argumentative, narrative, and descriptive by
 - thinking creatively
 - communicating ideas coherently
 - forming generalizations based on appropriate data
 - supporting such generalizations through the use of relevant factual information



A Constitution for South Sudan

Student assignment sheet

Background:

During our founding period, early Americans struggled through the approach to democracy. Citizens in our colonies and then in our nation debated long and hard, creating the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. All of these documents played important roles in our early history, and all of them were the result of important compromises.

Today, the citizens of the Republic of South Sudan, the newest country in the world, face similar challenges. After fifty years of war, more than 98% of the people of South Sudan voted to declare their country's independence from Sudan. Now, the country needs to develop its government. How can the early experience of the United States help the South Sudanese?

Your task:

The National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan has invited the citizens of democratic countries to share their understanding of the difficult choices that their own governments made in the past. These legislators are particularly interested in the arguments that our founders had, and the ways they resolved them. They are also hoping that we might advise them about how they should resolve similar issues.

Your first task is to inform them of one key issue that caused disagreement during our founding period and explain how it was resolved. Your second task is to advise the South Sudanese on how they should apply the lessons learned from that discussion to their own country. You may choose to present this argument in any of these ways:

- in a written position paper
- as a formal letter to the National Legislative Assembly
- in another format that respects the seriousness of this work



A Constitution for South Sudan

Teaching Notes

These notes contain a high level of detail, in an effort to clarify one way in which this performance task might unfold. Along with guiding the assessment itself, they integrate learning activities that prepare students for the assessment task. Students who have not yet mastered the competency of developing a powerful argument will find these activities helpful. Teachers are welcome to either follow these steps or create their own structures for teaching and assessment.

Part 1, a learning activity:

Students read and analyze background information on South Sudan. (see page 11)

- Independently, students engage in a close-read of the fact page on South Sudan, considering the questions:
 - What similarities do you see between the early days of America and the early days of South Sudan?
 - What questions must you consider as you wonder about the establishment of successful government in South Sudan?

Part 2, a bridging activity:

Working in small groups, students use learning materials from this unit to create a fact sheet on colonial and early America, using a similar format as the South Sudan fact sheet. (NOTE: This should not take more than one period, as this is a culling of information from unit learning)

- Divide the class into small groups, explaining that each group will create a one to two page fact sheet about the United States in its early days. (Alternatively, this can be done as homework)
- Groups briefly present their fact sheets in a gallery walk, where other students will use post-its to offer suggestions and commendations about the material included.
- After the gallery walk, groups convene and make revisions and adjustments to their fact sheet, then ensure that each individual has a copy of this fact sheet.

Part 3, the performance task itself:

Students develop and present their argument.

- Explain that the task now is to use knowledge of America's founding to inform South Sudan of one key issue causing tension and disagreement, including the results, and then apply that issue in constructing an argument advising South Sudan of next steps for the good of their own country.
- Allow time for additional research, analysis, and revision throughout the performance task itself, as students determine this need for their own argument construction.

Part 5, learning from the assessment:

Students reflect on their work and make note of potential gaps in final argument, considering possible revisions.

- Students share their arguments with the class. Some options:
 - Silent gallery walk in which they look at posters of the work
 - Small group jigsaw activity, with full class share-out to wrap up
- Ask students to reflect on the process taken to develop the information and argument presented, considering the following questions:
 - What process did you take in reaching your conclusions?
 - How did you fill in the gaps in your understanding?
 - As you reached stumbling blocks in either your research or your argument construction, what steps did you take to resolve these issues?
 - Are there gaps in your final argument? How would you revise your argument to ensure that it is tight?

Possible Learning Activities:

These activities might form the heart of the Stage 3 learning plan, to help students build background knowledge and skill, deepen their understanding of effective arguments, and practice the kind of writing and/or speaking that they will require for their assessment.

- Read and analyze excerpts from US founding documents, looking for trends
- Read and analyze primary sources that illustrate important arguments that arose, e.g. representation in Congress
- Compare and contrast the ideas contained in the founding documents, particularly changes made between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution. Make a one-page summary of laws that existed at our founding (e.g. women could not vote, no direct election of Senate, etc.) and ask students to research the initial reasoning, the ultimate changes in the laws, and the reasoning behind the changes
- Thinking and re-thinking around the question “Does the US government make the grade?” critically considering the ideas of the founding documents as they impact everyday life in the US
- Socratic Seminar on the idea of “inalienable rights” and what those might be or whether they might change over time and under different world circumstances
- Read one or more articles about the history and founding of South Sudan, comparing and contrasting its story to that of the US. Write short explanations of an event or an idea, focusing on clarity and effective organization.
- Using knowledge of South Sudan’s history and founding, construct a t-chart of “South Sudan needs...” vs. “South Sudan does NOT need...”
- Thinking and re-thinking around the question “What is a powerful argument?” Students might begin a class list, then refine it after each reading, writing, or discussion, based on new understanding.
- Read multiple short texts that contain arguments, including some strong arguments and some weak arguments, with analysis.
- Point/Counter-point: have two students assume opposing positions on an issue, then present them. Classmates listen to both and discuss how to develop an argument that takes a position but accounts for the other opinion.
- Practice using one set of understandings to address a new question, such as applying the various ideas debated by the earliest patriots to the development of the Constitution. Provide or guide the use of graphic organizers for organizing information and drawing conclusions.
- (Also, the learning activities detailed in the “Teacher Notes” to the performance task.)

Ideas for Differentiation

(the beginnings of a list)

- differentiate by reading level in the choice of texts assigned to individual students
- support students in choosing an appropriate mode for sharing their argument (see the student assignment sheet for possible modes)
- to extend this unit into the realm of research, have students develop a search strategy, then search for key information about South Sudan. Students might work in groups for this research, with different groups responsible for finding different kinds of information.
- integrate additional visual texts of various sorts, including videos, photographs, and/or charts and graphs, particularly to help students visualize what life is like in South Sudan
- support English language learners by including vocabulary keys for more challenging texts or offering simplified versions
- consider providing graphic organizers for students who are having difficulty organizing information or drawing connections between the founding debates of the US and the current-day situation in South Sudan
- South Sudan already has a constitution. Students who have mastered key competencies might extend their learning by reading excerpt of this constitution and comparing/contrasting the South Sudanese case with our own.
- to extend this unit to a more global view of the issues, have students research instances where the US has intervened in the forming of government for new or developing nations, considering the question "Is the US ideal of government transferable to all nations?", and construct a related argument

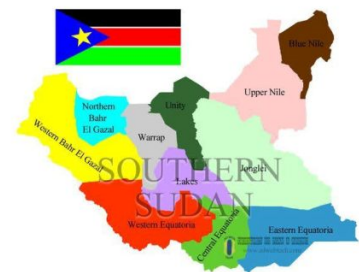
South Sudan Facts and Figures



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THE LAND:

- roughly the size of Texas
- shares a border with North Sudan (see above)
- one of the least developed regions in the world
- little infrastructure: there was only a mile or two of pavement in its capital just a little over a year ago.
- ten states, in three provinces
- very rural



THE PEOPLE:

- population is disputed (A 2008-09 census found that it had 8.26 million, but the southern government argued that the south has between 11 million and 13 million.)
- more than 200 ethnic groups
- most practice traditional or indigenous faiths
- Christians and Muslims make up the minority
- many southerners are farmers or cattle keepers, others sell tea and other goods
- about 85% of the population is illiterate

THE ECONOMY:

- high food prices
- high unemployment
- high poverty
- sub-Saharan Africa's third-largest oil producer, and the south should

assume control of more than 75% of the daily oil production of 490 000 barrels (but there are disputes likely with northern Sudan)

- reserves of copper, gold, and tin
- Vast tracts of arable land

HISTORY:

- history of interethnic warfare (because of colonial rule, South Sudanese are generally not in favor of Islam)
- Sudan gained independence from Britain in 1956
- internal north-south conflict began in 1955; southerners link this to colonial rule which was perceived as unequal (preference given to elite Arabs in North)
- 1962-1972 – first southern rebellion
- Peace deal from 1972 to 1983; did not satisfy south
- 1983-2005 – war resumed
- 2005 – Comprehensive Peace Agreement: 6 year period for semiautonomous government, interim constitution adopted
- First president (Dr. Garang) died in 2005 and deputy took over
- January 2011 - self-determination vote, more than 98% voted for secession
- July 2011 – admitted as 193rd member of United Nations
- Currently at war with 7 armed groups

GOVERNMENT (GoSS):

- The interim government (transitional semiautonomous government) has been in place since 2005, and elected officials will fulfill their terms
- Transitional Constitution is currently in place (based on amendments to the interim constitution adopted in 2005)
- President Kiir has been sworn in for a four-year term (began in 2010), president serves as the President of South Sudan and the First Vice-President of the Republic of Sudan

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/South-Sudan-facts-and-figures-20110709>

<http://www.goss.org/>

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